

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

DATE: July 20, 2006

CALLED TO ORDER: 5:04 p.m.

ADJOURNED: 5:38 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

ATTENDING MEMBERS

Vernon Brown, Chairman
Bob Cockrum
Susie Day
Ron Gibson
Dane Mahern
William Oliver
Earl Salisbury

ABSENT MEMBERS

Monroe Gray

AGENDA

PROPOSAL NO. 365, 2006 - appoints Steve Rudner to the Indianapolis Greenways
Development Committee
"Do Pass" Vote: 6-0

Presentation on Windsor Village – Cindy Porteous

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

The Parks and Recreation Committee of the City-County Council met on Thursday, July 20, 2006 at Windsor Village, 2501 North Kenyon. Chairman Vernon Brown invited park attendees Trace and Reggie to call the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. with the following members present: Bob Cockrum, Susie Day, William Oliver and Earl Salisbury. Ron Gibson and Dane Mahern arrived shortly thereafter. Monroe Gray was absent.

Chairman Brown thanked Windsor Village for allowing the Committee to hold their meeting at the facility this evening. He said that he is excited about the opportunities for children at this facility, both presently and in the future.

PROPOSAL NO. 365, 2006 - appoints Steve Rudner to the Indianapolis Greenways Development Committee

Mr. Rudner stated that he is the chief executive officer of an Indianapolis-based consulting firm and has been involved in supporting City-related initiatives for the past five years. He said that he also serves on the Board of Directors for the Dayspring Homeless Shelter, and it would be his privilege and honor to serve on the Greenways Development Committee.

Councillor Oliver said that according to his resumé, it looks like Mr. Rudner has been involved with some work in Chicago. He asked how that background and experience can be used here in Indianapolis. Mr. Rudner said that he is not sure the experiences with which he was involved in Chicago are directly applicable to this appointment, as every city is unique and every city's needs are unique. However, having lived in Chicago for 15 years, he has seen the development of such things as bike pathways, which are much more prevalent in Chicago, and the parks in Chicago have been made accessible to the community. He added that he feels his experience in supporting clients and the public sector, whether raising money or getting more involvement from people, will serve him well in this appointment.

[Clerk's Note: Councillor Gibson arrived at 5:07 p.m.]

Councillor Cockrum said that there have been problems with attendance on this committee, and stated that he is somewhat of a self-appointed monitor of board and committee appointments. He said that his acceptable threshold is a 70% attendance rate and he simply wanted Mr. Rudner to know this in advance.

Councillor Cockrum moved, seconded by Councillor Oliver, to send Proposal No. 365, 2005 to the full Council with a "Do Pass" recommendation. The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

Chairman Brown thanked Mr. Rudner for being willing to volunteer his time and experience to the Greenways Development Committee.

PRESENTATION ON WINDSOR VILLAGE – Cindy Porteous, Executive Director,
Indianapolis Parks Foundation

Chairman Brown recognized State Representative Mae Dickinson and Department of Parks and Recreation Director Joseph Wynns. He introduced Mary McBeth, Park Manager and Neighborhood Association President, and Cindy Porteous, Executive Director of the Indianapolis Parks Foundation.

Ms. Porteous stated she met with Director Wynns about a year and a half ago regarding possible capital projects for involvement by the Foundation. She said that Mr. Wynns mentioned Windsor Village, and the Foundation immediately got on board. She said that after determining the needs of the community, the Foundation began talking with some potential funding sources. The immediate response was surprising. She said that this community center and park are not typical building projects, but rather have become a catalyst for change. She said that the park was built in 1953, with the actual neighborhood being built during World War II, when Naval Avionics came to the community. Although Naval Avionics is now Raytheon and Interstate 70 cut off the neighbors to the north; this is still a densely populated area serving roughly 2,700 people. The new site plan was just presented this week and includes two more acres of land east of this property, which was purchased in January. The new property will allow for the community center and adequate parking, with significant greenspace still available. The proposed community center will be approximately 12,000 square feet, with an indoor gymnasium for year-round use, a computer lab, and space for community partnership programs.

Ms. Porteous said that the Indianapolis Public Schools wants to locate a tutoring program at the facility; therefore, the project also impacts education. The Indianapolis Police Department (IPD) is concerned about the high crime in the area, with over 825 felonies in 2005. Many residents do not feel safe in this community, and IPD has become a partner with this project to help meet the needs of the neighbors and allow them to feel safer. She said that when she was a child, Arlington Avenue was a showplace and a place that everyone wanted to be. She said that they want to bring some pride back to the community and are partnering with local organizations to do that. She said that 49% of the homes in Windsor Village are rentals, with 15% vacant or abandoned. There will be 18 parcels on the tax sale this September from this neighborhood alone. She said that they want to change that. Money has been put toward a house on Catherwood, with the IPD OK (Our Kids) Program volunteering with a renovation using youth to turn that house around and sell it to a first-time buyer.

[Clerk's Note: Councillor Mahern arrived at 5:18 p.m.]

Ms. Porteous said that they are working with the Department of Metropolitan Development (DMD) to identify the houses that are abandoned or vacant, so that they can be turned into affordable homes. Working with the Indianapolis Neighborhood Housing Partnership, they hope to turn some of these houses into affordable homes for first-time buyers and provide programs for those who want to be first-time home owners. She said that they hope to also revitalize economic development in the area because of this new center. She added that this is not just a bricks and mortar project, but they hope to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives in this area. This will be the first center built on the east side and could possibly service more than 9,000 people who now have to travel to other centers further away. The Indianapolis Parks Foundation Board of Directors unanimously embraced this capital campaign at their May meeting. They are hoping to raise \$3 million to renovate this park and build the community center, but also want the project to serve as a model for other areas of the City in the future.

Councillor Gibson said that this is very exciting and very encouraging to residents of the east side. He thanked the Foundation for their efforts in partnering with community leaders and Director Wynns. He also thanked Chairman Brown for holding the Committee hearing in this facility to witness first-hand an area on the move towards meeting its community's needs.

Chairman Brown said that providing safety and affordable housing, as well as a place to congregate, is what will help with the welfare and future of the children in this area. The educational and housing components really add to this project and will provide untold opportunities for this community.

Joseph Wynns, Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation, stated that Jackie Greenwood, principal of Arlington High School, has agreed to send students and teachers from Arlington to begin tutoring at this facility once this project is completed. He said that a computer lab will help make this an effective after-school program. The project is bringing many different entities together to partner for success.

Mae Dickinson, State Representative, stated that she is very excited about this project. She said that she has received letters from children about the pressure to take drugs, no recreation after school, teen pregnancy, and many other issues. She said that this center is not in her district, but many of the children in her district will benefit from the facility.

Councillor Cockrum asked about the funding plan for the \$3 million. Ms. Porteous said that the Foundation has identified potential lead gift contributors and will meet with them in the next several months. She said that they will not publicly announce this campaign until those lead gifts are in hand. They anticipate that they will have raised \$2 million of

the \$3 million needed by the end of the year. She added that Committee members should feel free to alert those they know that could participate as a lead gift contributor. Councillor Cockrum asked if the project qualifies for any federal programs. Ms. Porteous said that not many federal programs are funded right now. Mr. Wynns agreed and said that urban recreation funding programs have zeroed out. He said that most of the funding will come from local organizations, philanthropies, and corporations in the community.

Chairman Brown thanked Ms. Porteous and Mr. Wynns for the presentation and said that he appreciates their efforts with this project.

OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Cockrum stated that the City recently received 15 to 17 acres on Lynhurst Drive, and he has a meeting set up with property owners to the south of that property to agree on an easement for an entrance off of Lynhurst. He said that he will let Mr. Wynns know how that meeting goes tomorrow afternoon.

Chairman Brown asked how the summer lunch program is going. Mr. Wynns said that the program is going well, and they believe they will serve at a minimum of 125,000 meals this summer in approximately 92 locations. Chairman Brown said that it is unfortunate that there is a need for summer lunches, but it is a good thing that the Parks Department has the opportunity to provide them.

Councillor Mahern stated that the Indianapolis Parks Foundation does a great job of providing statistical data about the community and its needs. He said that knowing that 40.3% of the population in this area is age 20 or younger definitely shows a need for a project like this. He added that improving one area will ultimately affect other areas. He said that he also appreciates the way the Parks Department and the Foundation work together.

Chairman Brown said that there are a lot of good things going on with Parks throughout the County, and he hopes the Committee will be invited to other districts to see some of the great things going on and to realize outstanding needs. There being no further business, and upon motion duly made, the meeting was adjourned at 5:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vernon Brown, Chairman

VB/ag